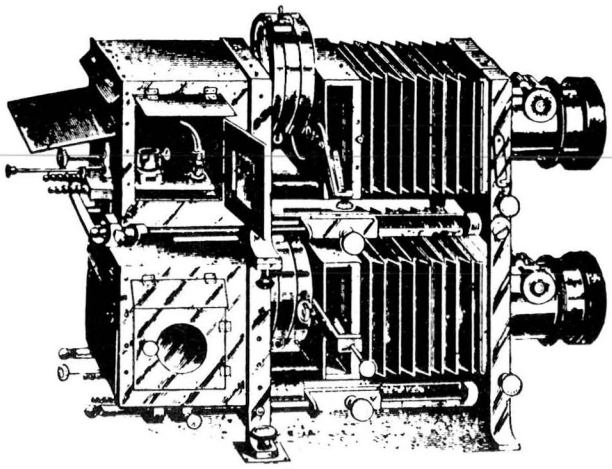
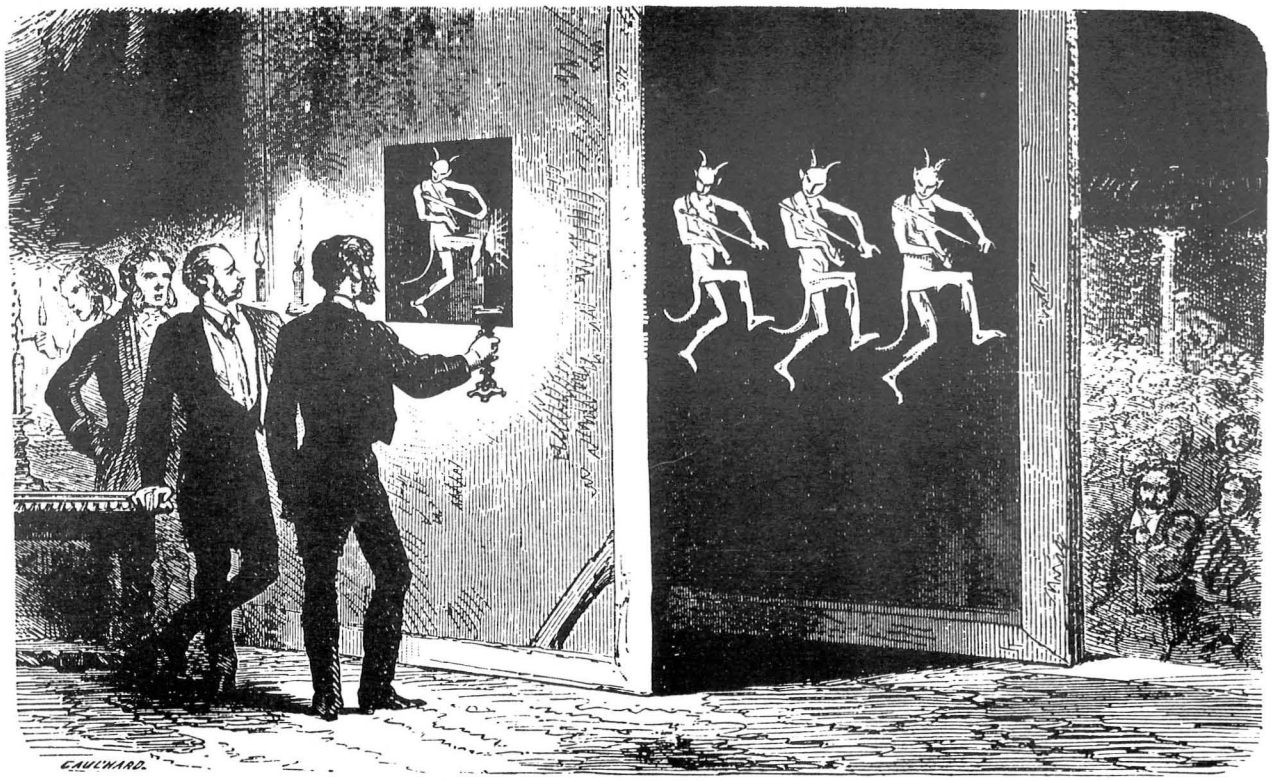


THE IMPROVED "BOSTON IDEAL."

The Magic Lantern Bulletin

Vol. VII, No. 4
March, 1986



GAUCHARD.

5a. The principle of the "dance of the sorcerers" is demonstrated with separate candles. When a lens is used the image carrier must be inverted.

By the time most of you receive this, the Second International Convention of the Magic Lantern Society of Great Britain will be history. To take place April 4-6, 1986, the convention will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the society and feature a full roster of speakers and events. At the time of this writing, the schedule will include the following:

Friday, April 4

The Professor Optix Magic Lantern Show--Larry Rakow (USA)
Magic Lantern Ephemera--Dick Balzer (USA)
Albert Smith, One Man's View of Mont Blanc--Mike Simkin (UK)
A Room With A View--Ron Morris (UK)
Black Soiree--Mondo Niovo (Italy)

Saturday, April 5

Toy Magic Lantern Extravaganza--Ernst Hrabalek (Austria)
Madame Crozier's Grand Tour--Magie Lumineuse (UK)
Dissolving Views--David and Leslie Evans (UK)
The America of Joseph Boggs Beale--Terry Borton (USA)
Scientific Lanterns-Their Development and Use--Gerard L'E Turner (UK)
Musical Interlude With the Wagenaar Family (Holland)
Lear's Magical Lanterns--Doug and Anita Lear (UK)

Sunday, April 6

Optical Illusions--Willem Wagenaar (Holland)
Auction
Finale: White's Wonders--Mervyn Heard (UK)

Leaves you kind of breathless, doesn't it? More incredible yet, additional acts are rumored to be appearing (though when they could possibly be scheduled is the kind of tactical problem that would send a Napoleon fleeing!). Reporters are being lined up as quickly as passports are validated and we should have a complete description of the convention in a future edition of the **Bulletin**.

The Magic Lantern Bulletin is published quarterly by the Magic Lantern Society of the U.S. and Canada. Annual dues are $15.

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Terry Borton
Bridge Road
Haddam, CT 06438

This is our traditional holiday issue (though the holiday appears to be April Fool's Day this year rather than Christmas); the months since we put the last **Bulletin** to bed have been filled with family, friends, hard work, holiday cheer, and not a little sad news.

I received a letter from past-editor Leora Wells in late December informing me of Bob Woodward's death of cancer in August, 1985. Bob was an important part of the glue that held this small society together. His outstanding articles and ongoing bibliography were always precise and informative--scholarly writings in the best sense of the word. When I sent out a call for help editing the **Bulletin** last year, Bob was the first to respond. He noted that he had other pressing responsibilities (particularly with his church), but offered to lend a hand where needed. When we featured a Lantern Readings Contest several issues back, Bob was the first to submit an original poem--a piece so witty and delightfully Victorian that it was awarded first prize.

Bob and I never met, though we corresponded often. He criss-crossed the country every year and we had talked about one of his trips taking him to Cleveland, but it was never to be. This issue includes the final installment of Bob's "Magic Lantern Bibliography." It would be a fitting memorial to him for another from our ranks to pick up where he left off; the bibliography is an ongoing effort and remains incomplete despite Bob's years of effort.

This issue of **The Magic Lantern Bulletin** is dedicated to the memory of Bob Woodward.

Our experiment with computer generated typography continues though it has gained little ground since the last edition. Hopefully, the next **Bulletin** will be set with the help of a well-reviewed layout program and produced via a laser printer; the slightly fuzzy print you've come to love should (with a little luck and a strong tail wind) be a thing of the past.

We're still about one issue behind the times. Volume VIII, No. 1 will be published soon, followed close on the heels by our second reprint issue--numbers 9 (May, 1875) through 16 (December, 1875) of Volume I of **The Magic Lantern**, America's best 19th century journal.

BUT IN ORDER TO RECEIVE ALL OF WHAT 1986 HAS IN STORE, YOU MUST BE A PAID-IN-FULL MEMBER OF THE MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY !

As agreed upon at last year's U.S. Convention, annual dues are $15; please send your check--made out to the "Magic Lantern Society of the U.S. and Canada"--to Treasurer Terry Borton, Bridge Road, Haddam, CT 06438. We'll be compiling our membership list during the next few months and sending it out by June 1--DON'T BE LEFT OUT!! Included with this issue is a copy of your current listing; if you wish to change it, please update the info and return the form directly to me at my Wilton Road address by May 1.

In addition to Bob Woodward's Bibliography, this **Bulletin** is proud to feature a major article on Robertson's Phantasmagoria by Willem Tebra and a (belated) Christmas show by Terry Borton. We've got a wonderful piece by new member Al Kattelle on the Marcy Sciopticon planned for the next edition, but do need supplemental articles for upcoming issues; send all contributions to the editor's attention. I look forward to meeting many of you in London in a few weeks (and promise to share the sights, sounds, and experiences of that grand city with the rest of you upon my return!). 'Till then...

***

ROBERTSON AND HIS PHANTASMAGORIA

By Willem Tebra

Phantasmagoria: The art of making phantoms or other apparitions visible in the form of luminous figures on or against a suitable background. By changing the dimensions of the figures, the illusion is created that the phantom can be called forth and speak.

Description: This is done by means of a moveable magic lantern and specially prepared lantern slides. The speaking of the phantom calls for special apparatus or a good ventriloquist. The word phantasmagoria was possibly coined by Robertson in 1788 from two Greek words: phantasma = phantom and agoreuein = to talk.

**

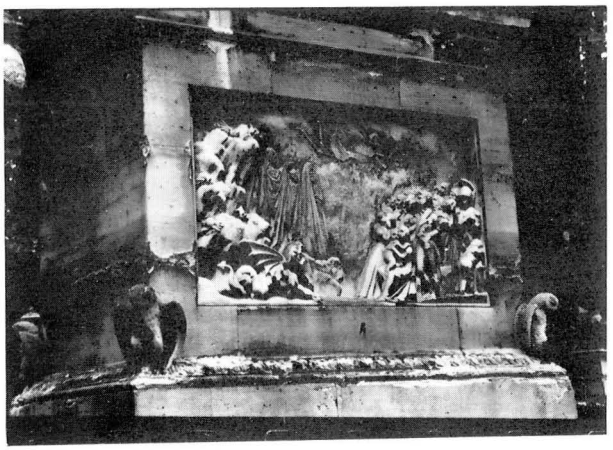
Introduction

In the world of the magic lantern, Monsieur E.G. Robert is the phantasmagorist Robertson. His most important contribution was the reviving and refining of the phantasmagoria by means of a self-built magic lantern, even during the tumultuous days of the French Revolution. Etienne Gaspard Robert was born in 1763 near Liege (then a part of the Southern Netherlands and today a part of Belgium) and died in 1837 near Paris. His tomb is located in the

famous Père Lachaise cemetary in Paris (figure 1). The engraved slabs on his tomb mark the two important performances in his life: the phantasmagoria and his baloon ascents.

But for another of his enterprises--the publishing of his **Memoirs**--we would know him only by what his contemporaries had written about him. Robertson was 68 years old when he published:

Memoires Recréatifs Scientifiques et Anecdotiques du Physicien Aéronaute E.G. Robertson. Volume 1 (1831), 488 pages and Volume 2 (1833), 432 pages.



1. Tomb of Robertson, Cimetiere Parisien, de l'est 16, Rue de Repos, Paris. This photo displays the phantasmagoria scene on one of the side slabs.

Portrait of an Era

In the two volumes, Robertson described his life in a whirl of short stories. His anecdotes, however, are not presented as a history and I believe most of the events were colored in such a way as to be easily digested in his time. Moreover, the form and content of the anecdotes not only create a certain atmosphere, but make it possible to hide details behind the related events. For his time, he was a man of considerable education, a specialist in optics and a calculating showman. Reading these memoirs, one is immersed in the 18th century. The Enlightenment in that period was (only apparently) interrupted by the Revolution.

The portrait of this era was shaped by disbelief and irreverence. Many long-standing values were abandoned. The upper classes, while holding onto their privileges, turned from religion to the idea of the Enlightenment and the logic of physics. Meanwhile, all society reveled in fantastic gimmicks and the exotic imagery of eastern religions. Mozart's **Zauberflöte**, written in 1791, shows a mixture of these elements of reason and exotica.

The events of this period seem to have shocked Robertson very seriously. He saw the possibility of making a living out of the general interest in the "Physique Amusante." With his Physical Cabinet, a collection of apparatus comprising a small laboratory, he was allowed to give public demonstrations. Cautiously balanced between pride and enterprise, he tried to gather recognition and money. Luckily, he developed a reputation as a vigorous fighter against superstition.

In those days, Paris numbered half a million inhabitants and was a town that offered many different entertainments: Franz Mesmer gave his seances on animal magnetism and Francois Seraphin showed his famous Chinese shades. Many other performances, such as Galvanism, Ballooning, and the Phantasmagoria were really outstanding.

Robertson tried to demonstrate that the illusions he presented obeyed simple physical laws. In those days it was quite an honor to be referred to as a physicist who presented his experiments well. To date, however, it is difficult to differentiate Robertson's activities from those of charlatans; his was a living on the shady fringes of respectability.

In a roundabout way, the biographical anecdotes explained some of the secrets of the phantasmagoria. In reality, Robertson revealed to the reader a couple of principles, but no details. In chapter VII he explained why and how he became an adept of the phantasmagoria. When Robertson was in his twenties, he read about Athanasius Kircher's belief in the devil. Robertson did not take this belief seriously because he had grown out of this superstition after reading **Recréation de Midorge** and the **Sciences Occultes**. The **Essais sur la Magie, les Prodiges et les Miracles** provided special insights, although he balanced between terror and disbelief. After a few weeks he suppressed his terror and tried to call the devil without success. This enterprise liberated him from this superstition once and for all.

He continued to study the stories of the underground vaults and the rites of Memphis and Trophonius. Additionally, he studied the mysteries of Ceres and Isis. He was even acquainted with the mysterious story of Cagliostro. Because he had studied for the priesthood, these kind of books were easily accessible to him. After all, he called himself l'Abbé Robert.

The phantasmagoria remained dormant in books until he read about the ancient Greek theater Nekymantion and thus rediscovered the principles of a magic play with shadow figures. Until that moment, optics had just been interesting; now he had a purpose.

In 1784, Robertson constructed a magic lantern according to instructions supplied by Kircher (**Ars Magna Lucis et Ombrae**...1671), Schott (1657), Viegleb, Zahn (1665) and others. M. Villette, a friend who practiced optics, helped him build a magic lantern with which he made some preliminary experiments. Robertson was clever with his hands; thanks to a course in painting he was able to design his own slides.

In 1783, the Swiss Pierre Argand had improved his oil lamp, and Robertson probably adapted Argand's design to construct his own light source with a 5" diameter.

Following some initial performances for friends, he began his public lessons on physics at the Pavillon de l'Echiquier in Paris. Soon he added the phantasmagoria to his program and the public response was enthusiastic. He performed the show with the help of six men and several magic lanterns. After a while he moved to the more convenient Convent des Capucines.

In 1798 he achieved success with his phantasmagoria show and in a few years had made a fortune from it. When the phantasmagoria was no longer profitable in Paris, he left Place de Vendôme and travelled throughout Europe and Russia. This part of his life is marked by stories of his balloon ascents. Remarkably, his writings on this subject are far more lucid than those relating his earlier adventures.

Robertson Himself

In several places, Roberson's memoirs describe the attempts of imitators to steal the secrets of his phantasmagoria. Even in old age, he did not trust his readers enough to divulge his knowledge directly. His reasoning was rather alchemistic and one has to accept his suspicious nature and circumspect language.

Figure 2 shows an old print of Robertson. Who was this man? I suppose he felt a little undervalued because he was not an invited member of l'Académie Royale des Sciences de

Paris or l'Institut. Was this because Robertson had not followed an approved course or because he was not a Frenchman? In connection with this, I suspect that Robertson had an influential enemy, probably his former tutor Professor Charles.

Some remarks in his writings lend credence to this theory; during the entire phantasmagoria period, for instance, Robertson made no balloon ascents in France. Professor Charles invented the hydrogen balloon in 1783 and made ascents in collaboration with the brothers Robert, who were no relation to Robertson. Could this possibly be the main reason Etienne Gaspard Robert changed his name to Robertson?

2. A reproduction of a physionotrace print of Robertson. Source: P. Delree

The Fantascope

The Fantascope is a kind of magic lantern. Robertson described his Fantascope, patented in 1799 (B.F.nr 65), in more detail than the phantasmagoria itself. A reconstruction of the apparatus according to descriptions in the Memoirs--given about thirty years later--is shown in figures 3a and 3b. The lamphouse was made of walnut and measured about 40x30x20 inches. The interior was accessible by means of three apertures in the walls, each covered with black velvet to prevent the escape of unwanted light.

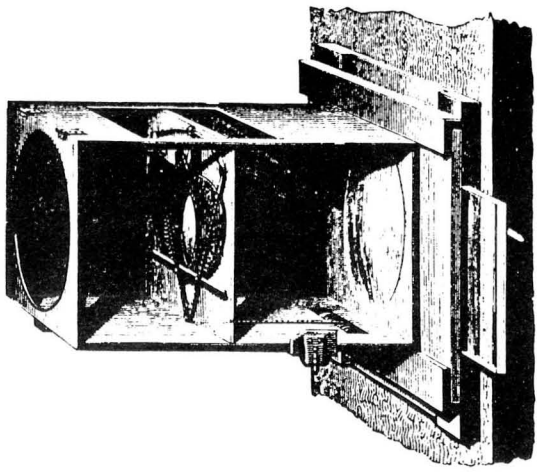
A 4-inch circular aperture was cut in the front of the lamphouse on which the rectangular wooden lens tube (measuring 9 inches long and 5 inches wide) was mounted. A slide carrier was located between this tube and the lamphouse. Mounted on the inside of the lamphouse and protruding into the circular aperture, Robertson placed a thick, plano-convex condensing lens. The oil lamp, probably an Argand provided with a parabolic mirror, was placed about 4 inches from the thick lens.

The interior of the lamphouse was painted white. A chimney of bent iron stovepipe was placed on top. At the front of the lens tube, Robertson mounted a biconvex objective with a focal length of 9 inches, adjusted by rack and pinion. It was an invention of his own, and eliminated the difficult adjustments of the oil lamp that were formerly required.

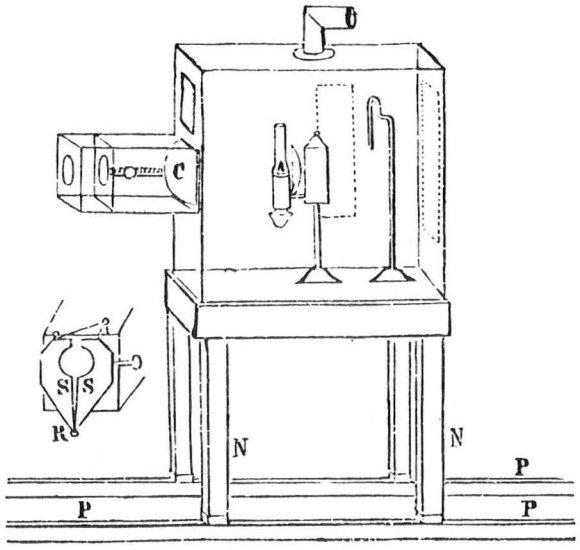
In approximately the middle of the tube, an adjustable diaphragm regulated the brightness of the image while the lantern was moved closer to or further from the screen. The diaphragm also worked as a shutter. It was made of two thin lamellas of brass, mounted like a pair of scissors and operated by squeezing with a knob.

While the lantern was being moved, the operator must have paid close attention to the adjustments of objective and diaphragm. In later phantasmagoria, someone--probably Thomas Young--added an ingenious connection between these adjustments by means of an

eccentric and the wheels of the lantern. It was then possible to maintain both focus and light intensity automatically, even while moving. It is remarkable that in many publications one can find a print of a double fantascope lantern with these automatic adjustments. This print, of course, is of a later improvement.



3b. Part of the lenstube of a Fantascope.



3a. Sketch of the Fantascope, according to Robertson.

Robertson employed four uprights to level his primitive Fantascope to a height of about 5 feet. The uprights, provided at the base with copper wheels, were guided by two rails fixed on the floor and perpendicular to the center of the screen

The Building

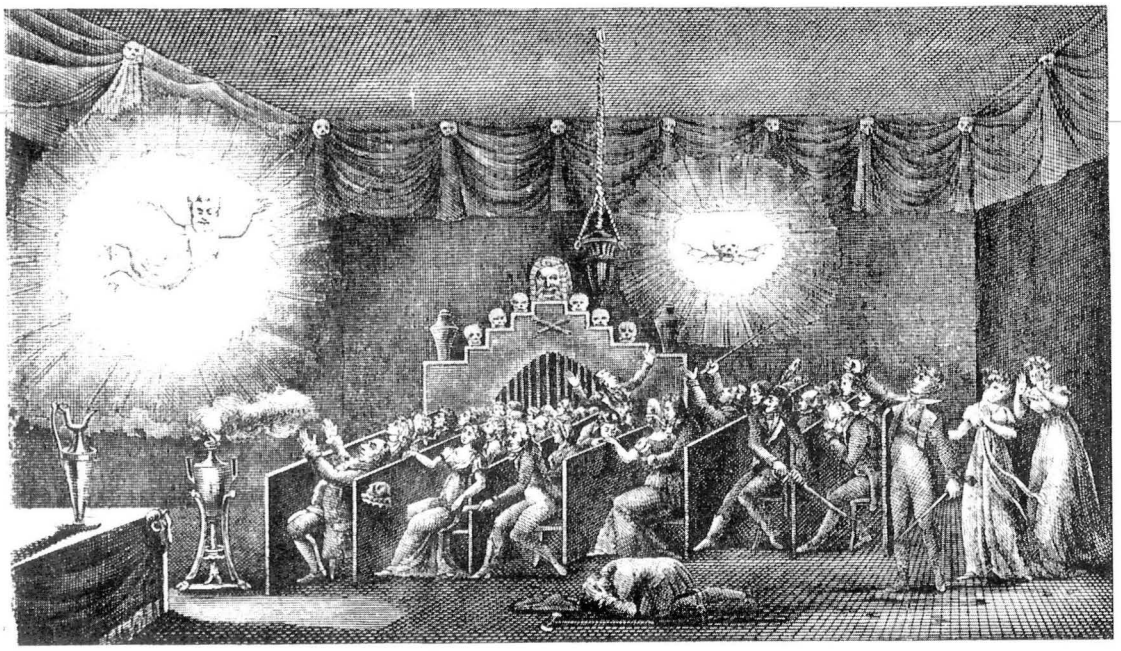
In **Marion's Optiks** , C.W. Quin mentioned, "The old Capucine convent near Place Vendôme was more adapted to Robertson's purposes than the former Pavillon. It was in the middle of a vast cloister crowded with tombs and funeral tablets. It was approached by a series of dark passages decorated with weird and mysterious paintings and the very door was covered hieroglyphs. The chapel itself was hung with black velvet and feebly illuminated by a sepulchral lamp."

An idea of this place is given in figure 4, the title page of the first **Memoir** . Perhaps a picture really is worth a thousand words; this one wildly stimulates the fantasy. But Robertson, his feet firmly on earth, remarked, "I needed a hall of at least 70 feet long and 40 feet large that was painted totally black. On one side there must be a section of at least 18 feet for a projection room, well-separated by a huge screen from the public.

The screen was made of cotton, roughly 20 feet square and probably oiled or waxed to improve its translucence. Robertson called this screen "the mirror" because the image projected on it was a mirror image--that is, transposed left to right-- to the public.

Phantasmagoric Proceedings

A few attributes of the hall, the ambulant phantoms, the stationary creatures on the walls and the tormentors in the corners are all depicted in figure 5. In reality, much of this

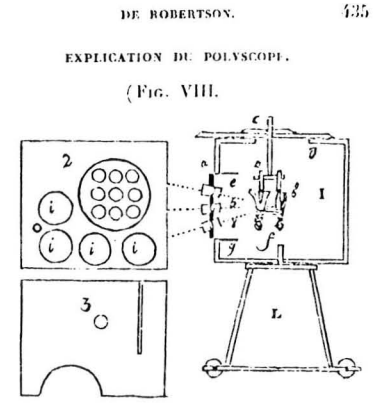


4. The title page of the **Memoirs** provides an impression of a phantasmagoric seance.

was induced by the power of suggestion. The techniques were simple. The "dance of the sorcerers" was created by the priciple depicted in figure 5a (cover illustration). Multiplication and movement were achieved by means of several separately handled light sources. Another technique for "dance of the sorcerers" is that given in figure 5b. Here, the light source was fixed but multiple images were created with several lenses, each aimed in a slightly different direction. The lenses were mounted on a rotating disk and the projected image gave the impression of a merry-go-round. Further, the illuminated objects could also be turned around; the luminous picture must have been really impressive!

When the public had flocked together in the big hall of the old convent and Robertson had commanded attention, the silence was complete. He talked about the sensations called up by phantoms and witchcraft. He mentioned human interest in metaphysics and the possibility of conjuring forth the ghosts of famous men and women. When he ended his introduction, the old sepulchral lamp was suddenly extinguished and the public was immersed in a thick murk.

The sound of rain was heard, followed by thunder. Lightning flashed. The solemn bells of a church



DE ROBERTSON. 435

EXPLICATION DU POLYSCOPE.

(FIG. VIII.

(*Fig.* 1) *a*, le disque; *c*, 5, 8, les trois verres du milieu: *b*, les bâtons ronds auxquels sont attachées les figures; *c*, l'autre bâton rond qui tourne dans la coulisse; *d*, la fente, d'un bon pouce de largeur sur quatorze à quinze pouces de longueur; *e*, la coulisse qui couvre la fente; *f*, deux figures dont la hauteur ne peut excéder six pouces; *g*, un tuyau de carton pour écarter la lumière des verres; *L*, le support à roulettes; *t*, carton noir, derrière lequel on met les figures qu'on veut représenter.

(*Fig.* 2) ouverture ronde couverte par le disque, dans lequel se trouvent les neuf petits tubes avec leurs verres; *O*, un trou auquel on adapte un cône de carton, pour voir sur la toile si les figures sont au foyer, *iiii*, quatre lampes à réverbères, trois d'un côté, une de l'autre.

5b. A more advanced technique is possible with this kind of apparatus.

intoned danger, reinforced by a cold airstream flowing through the hall. When the sound of the bells faded away, an organ harassed the spectators. Just as the lightning seemed unendurable, a small light became visible in the distance. A human figure appeared, small at first but coming nearer with small steps and growing larger. It was as if it were about to step into the audience, but just as the spectators were seized with unreasoning fear, the phantom suddenly disappeared.

One of Robertson's favorite programs was "Diogenes with his lantern." The program is reproduced in figure 6. Diogenes is in search of a man, looking around and seemingly moving between the spectators. This illusion was so strong, ladies became upset and everyone was therefore amused. During Diogenes' act, handwriting appeared on the wall. With a slip slide, Robertson projected the words "Je cherche un homme," character by character, accompanied by a hand with a feather.

FANTASMAGORIE
DE ROBERT-SON,
Rue des Petits Champs, Cour des Capucines,
vis à vis la Place Vendome.

APPARITIONS de spectres, fantômes et revenans tels qu'ils ont dû se produire dans tous les tems, dans tous les lieux et chez tous les peuples.

EXPÉRIENCES sur le fluide Galvanique, dont l'application rend non seulement le mouvement, mais encore les habitudes aux corps privés de la vie depuis plusieurs jours.

La Salle où se réunit le public, en attendant les apparitions de la Fantasmagorie, offre tous les prestiges de l'époque imaginés jusqu'à présent pour tromper les yeux. Le spectateur voit successivement paroître sous ses yeux, les lieux où se sont faites les apparitions chez les anciens.

On y entend l'Harmonica de Franklin, cet instrument précieux est touché par le premier virtuose de Paris.

La Séance a lieu tous les jours à 7 heures, Cour des Capucines.

6. Program of a phantasmagoria performance. Source: P. Delree

Robertson's Magic

There is an interesting story in an old Dutch magazine on the origin of the street showman with magic lantern (see figure 7). In Amsterdam those men were called "Luikerwaal's," which indicates men who talked a curious mixture of German, Flemish, and French. They were from the land of Liege, which was occupied several times by various countries. Perhaps their choice of profession was inspired by their famous fellow-citizen.

There is still some magic surrounding Robertson. Recently, in 1984, there was an auction held at the hotel Drouet in Paris. The catalog noted several manuscripts and other effects having once belonged to Robertson. I wonder if one of these could have been **Art des Illusions** , which went astray before Robertson began his performances in Paris. Or perhaps the third part of his **Memoirs** , also a lost manuscript. Some friends told me that the "Club d'Amis les Lanternes Magiques" had attempted to call Robertson from the dead. After two centuries, how fitting to stage the revival of the phantasmagoria around his tomb!

(All rights on the preceding article reserved by W. Tebra, 1986.)

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2. **Robertson, Physicién et Aéronaute Liégeois** . Peirre Delree, La Vie Wallone t. XXVIII.
3. **De Oude Tijd** . J. Ter Gouw Haarlem 1874.

WRITING "THE SEARCH FOR SANTA"

By Terry Borton

WANTED: Christmas Slides
Contact Terry Borton

I've been running that ad in the **Bulletin** for several years now, trying to pull together enough Christmas material to do a professional-quality, full-length Christmas show. I'm blessed with several Beale Christmas sets--"'Twas The Night Before Christmas," and "Dickins' Christmas Carol"--but they do not make a show by themselves. A number of society members have helped out by responding to my ad (Thank You!), but miscellaneous Christmas slides didn't hold an audience when presented individually.

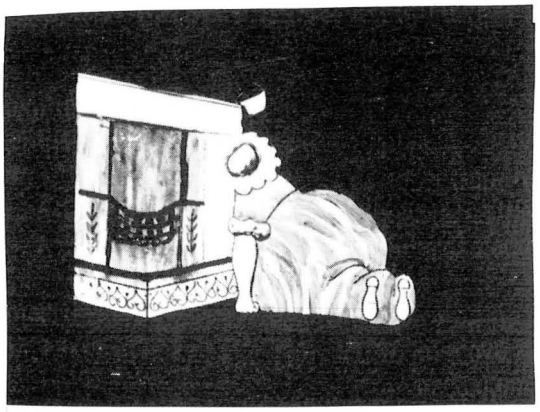
The answer? A script that wove individual slides into a coherent show segment. "The Search for Santa" is one such segment.

Finding a story line took some experimenting. Before I came up with the script included here, I tried out several others over the years. None were very successful, primarily because they were too educational and lacked drama.

The script for "The Search For Santa" really began to come together when I found a slide of a fantastic ice scene--the one I call here "The Gates of Fantasy." Suddenly I saw how I could move smoothly from realistic drawings in some slides to fantasy landscapes. That in turn could provide a context for describing the evolution of Santa--without being pedantic.

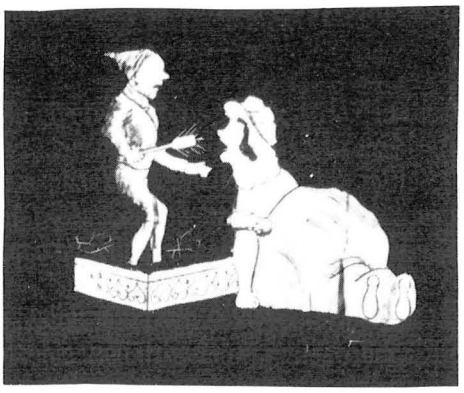
I've performed the Christmas show three times this year using "The Search For Santa" and other created segments. It's going very well, but each time I find something that could work a little better. I rearrange a sequence, or modify a script, or try another slide, or think, "If only I had a slide of _____." So...

WANTED: Christmas Slides
Contact Terry Borton



Now let's begin the search for Santa Claus. And who do you think she'll find in the chimney? (Santa Claus!)

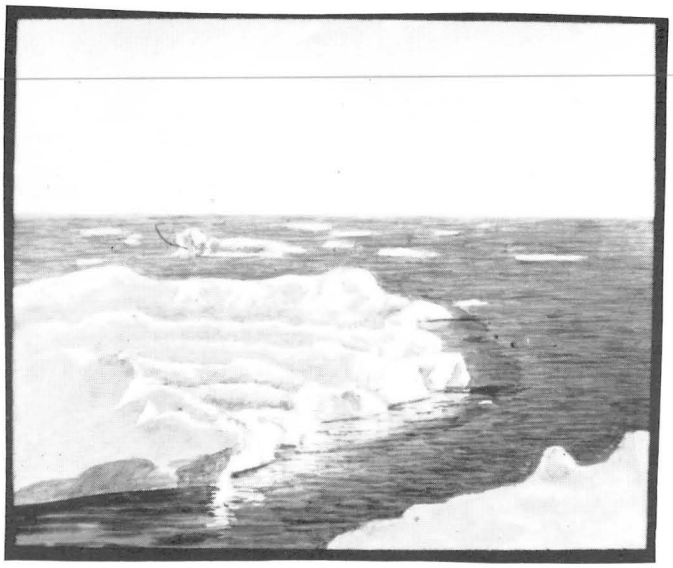
Wrong! Santa Claus doesn't come down the chimney 'till Christmas Eve.



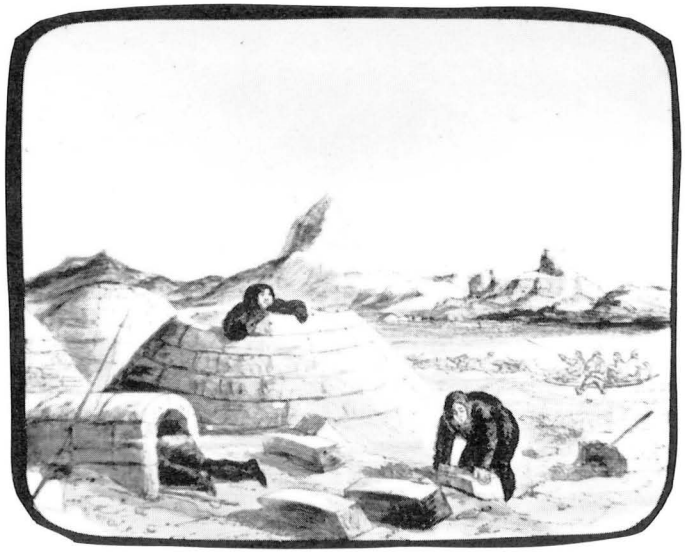
All you'll find there is a chimney sweep, cleaning the chimney for Santa!

To find Santa this early you have to go on a great journey. Here is the story of that journey--The Search for Santa Claus.

You set out in a huge ship and sail and sail across the ocean, to the North Pole.



In your search for Santa, you sail north till you pass the Arctic Circle, and come to the Land of Icebergs.



And from there you sail on, still <u>further</u> north, past the Land of Icebergs, to The Land of the Eskimo.

And on, you sail on, <u>still</u> further north, past the Land of the Eskimo, until you can sail no more. You have reached the Gates of Fantasy, entrance to The Land of the Northern Star, fabled home of Santa Claus.

At the edge of The Land of the Northern Star you prepare to leave your ship. You pack its sides all round with ice blocks, and cover its deck with a great tent. As the snow falls it will make a giant igloo to protect the ship's crew from the cold.

Then you set out on foot for the North Pole, travelling through The Land of the Northern Star. And as you walk, you test the snow at every step. You don't want to fall through the snow and become lost in the crevasses that protect Santa from intruders.

On and on you walk, further and further north, over mountains and canyons of ice. Finally, in the distance, you see The Great Mountain of the North Pole--home of Santa Claus.

And then you see a sign you have been looking for--reindeer in the frozen wilderness!

And suddenly you hear the jingle of sleigh bells, and the song of Santa Claus. You join in singing "Jingle Bells."

And finally, there he is--no, not Santa Claus, but the very first in his line, St. Nicholas. St. Nicholas was the Bishop of Myra, in Turkey, about 1700 years ago. For centuries he was the patron saint of children. You have come close to finding Santa Claus, but you haven't found him yet.

You search on, passing through centuries of time. The Reformation banned celebrations honoring saints, so St. Nicholas became tall gaunt Father Christmas--hardly the fat jolly Santa you're looking for.

You hear that the Germans clung to the old St. Nicholas, whom they called...Sinter Claus. You know you are getting closer. And sure enough, you learn that when German children immigrated to America, American children overheard their excited talk about Sinter Claus, and...mispronounced his name as...

Santa Claus! Fat, and jolly, and loaded with toys. So your journey is over. You have found Santa Claus at last!

MAGIC LANTERN BIBLIOGRAPHY VI (CONT.)
By Robert Woodward

III. Motion Pictures

Badlands (1973). Holly (Cissy Spacek), the daughter of a sign painter, fantasizes about a life that cannot be as she and her father's murderer, Kit (Martin Sheen), are on the run. Among the items the two of them bury as a kind of time capsule commemorating their adventures together are a group of stereoscopic slides. (This item supplements an earlier entry in "Magic Lantern Bibliography IV," December 1983, p. 12.)

Being There (1979). During the scene when Eve Rand (Shirley MacLaine) is attempting to seduce Chauncey Gardener (Peter Sellers), the voice of Mr. Rogers, the star of PBS's "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood," is explaining how the stereopticon operates. The background narration is highly appropriate, since Gardener, who has a child's mind, not only enjoys children's television shows but has just explained to the seductive Eve that he "likes to watch."

The Big Valley. In an episode entitled "Emperor of Rice," first broadcast on ABC in 1965, Victoria Barkley (Barbara Stanwyck) is tortured by Janet Masters (Julie Adams) in an effort to force her to sign a paper. The instrument of torture is a magic lantern equipped with a revolving disk containing five circular pieces of glass, each of a different color. The light is directed into Ms. Barkley's face. "Does the light bother you?" asks Ms. Masters. "I saw it used often by the terrorists in China. Simple but effective, particularly when a person is hungry and thirsty. Time begins to lose its hold...A day or two more and you'll begin to lose all reason. You'll beg me to let you sign it..." Finally, Ms. Barkley agrees to sign. While holding the pencil she again looks into the lens and, going momentarily beserk, upturns the lantern, which ignites straw and catches the house on fire. She escapes during the confusion.

Fanny and Alexander (1983). A magic lantern figures so prominently in this Ingmar Bergman film that the lantern operator, Christian Wirsen, is even acknowledged in the closing credits. Set in Uppsula in 1907-1908, the story relates the lives of several members of the wealthy Ekdahl family. A grandson, Alexander, is an introspective, evasive boy who cherishes the world of imagination and make-believe. One of his favorite toys is a magic lantern, with which he partially tells his sister and young cousins "the story of Arabella," featuring an animated slide showing "a figure floating on the moonlit rays."

My Name Is Nobody (1974). Early in this spaghetti Western about an aging gunfighter (Henry Fonda) who is being challenged by a newcomer (Terence Hill), the two are exchanging words near a building, on the wall of which is a poster advertising what is obviously an entertainment featuring dissolving views. A quick eye might catch more details about the announced performance, but it would need to be one of the quickest eyes in the West, or wherever.

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TODAY!!

7. A Luikerwaal is a sturdy but mis-shapen person with a special gift for the art of the magic lantern. The magic lantern society "Laterna Magica" in the Netherlands uses this picture as their emblem.